

of all however are the Burmese, or more correctly the Pegu ponies ; these are universally of the cob make, with great carcass, thick necks and short strong legs ; they are very easy for the saddle, generally ambling, and are very safe, fast and enduring : their great power renders them excellent for four-wheeled carriages ; and it is not uncommon to see one of them 13 hands high draw with ease a carriage that would be a good load for an ordinary horse of 15 : their chief defect is their impetuosity, which is excessive. This breed is particularly mindful of ill-treatment, and a person that has once misused one will seldom be able to do anything with him afterwards. They are of various colours, but I never saw a black one : the prevailing colour is gray, most beautifully dappled. They all have that peculiar fulness at the throat which belongs to the horses in ancient Grecian sculpture. Mares or stallions of this breed cannot be procured at any price whatever. A captain with whom I am intimate, a proprietor at Moulmein, assures me of this fact, which I have also heard from many others. No bribe would induce a native to expose himself to the certain torture and death that would follow a violation of this law.

“ I am decidedly of opinion that geldings stand work quite as well as entire horses here, and some of those persons most competent to judge concur with me. These Pegu ponies are a striking instance of the fact.

“ I do not know if you are aware of the amazing fecundity of the ‘ Tanree*,’ which is very abundant here. They sometimes produce as many as twenty-two young at a birth ; and from twelve to eighteen is their usual number. Their appearance is much like that of the hedgehog, and like those animals they hibernate in the dry season. As far as I can learn they are altogether insectivorous. They are far from being of so pacific a nature as the hedgehog, for they bite hard and hold on with great tenacity. The female when followed by her young will turn and face a pursuer with angry gruntings till her little ones are in safety. They are a favourite dish with the lower orders here, and are generally split down the back, after being singed like pigs, and are then smoked. They are usually fat, but the only one I ever tasted had a rank flavour that was by no means agreeable. They are not indigenous here, having been introduced from Madagascar ; but they are very numerous, notwithstanding their being destroyed in immense numbers for food.”

HABITS OF INSECTS.

Philosophical Hall, Leeds, Dec. 15, 1847.

DEAR SIR,—I know not whether the two accompanying scraps will be worth a line in the ‘ Annals of Natural History.’ The first is a case affording an illustration of the powers which the Arachnida possess of sustaining life when deprived of food.

* This must be the *Centetes setosus*, which appears to be the only species introduced into Mauritius.—T. B.

In July last I had a large specimen of *Ixodes* brought me, taken from off a West Indian tortoise. I put it into a pill-box, and having left home for a few weeks in the autumn, it was completely forgotten. Last month however (November) I happened to open the box, when I found the specimen still alive, though languid and shrivelled in appearance, accompanied by a strange-looking mass larger than itself, which upon examination proved to be an immense number of orange-coloured eggs, resembling a portion of the roe of a fish, but more minute in structure. This day I found the parent dead, but the eggs I think appear to have increased in size; whether they are likely to produce any young is still to be seen. At the lowest calculation the animal had lived four months without food.

My second is an instance either of affection or loyalty, I cannot tell which. In one of my colonies of ants, a small black one, the queen (which is as large as six of the workers at least), died a fortnight since from some cause, and lies in one of the passages of the formicary. But up to this day there has been constantly several workers attending her remains, occasionally touching her with their antennæ and striking her with their heads (an action common with this species of ant on meeting each other, which I have not observed in any other families). A few days since I poured some water into the nest, to see if it would cause the guards to forsake their charge, as water generally causes a dispersion when it suddenly enters their passages; but in this instance, although it threw them into some confusion, they would not leave the body of their queen. Is this affection?

I remain, dear Sir, yours respectfully,

HENRY DENNY.

Richard Taylor, Esq.

NOTE ON THE INSECTS OF MADEIRA.

We make the following extract, by permission of Mr. W. Thomson of King's College, from a private letter addressed to him from Madeira by our correspondent, T. V. Wollaston, Esq., of Jesus College, Cambridge:—

“The country here is most glorious; mountains rising 7000 feet towards the moon, and Funchal at the bottom of them, ‘looking at itself’ in the sea: the intermediate space filled up with wood and rock, and for the last 1000 feet with vineyards arranged on terraces and the country-houses of the ‘aristocracy’ of Funchal. The vegetation is grand to an excess: grapes, oranges, bananas, figs, pumpkins, guavas and prickly pears in actual profusion, with geraniums, cacti, fuchsias, myrtles, cassias and heliotropes spread over the country like weeds. The hills are tremendous, involving the necessity of keeping a horse, which is sometimes ‘too large a specimen to be convenient’ in entomological researches. Insects are themselves scarce here; so I have been driven to collect all orders alike, and muster 230 species, or 970 specimens; and as I have been here only six weeks, this will at least show you that entomology is still cherished, though under adverse circumstances and many local disad-